

Thoughts On Quail And Creation While Snowbound In Deer Camp

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12-11-69

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MERTZON — As this is being written, the weather is doing everything it can to postpone the Trans-Pecos deer season. Snow has fallen to depths of 12 inches; hunters have set and broken many records for long distance skidding. Most of the highways are iced over. Were it not for mass infatuation for deer hunting, the 7th Army couldn't have driven enough hombres out here for a heads-up domino game.

Visibility from this camp house is limited to the length of a football field. The only activity outside is a covey of quail rooting their groceries from underneath the snow.

I'd always wondered why these birds came equipped with topknots. Now it's easy to see what the Maker had in mind when he threw in the extra head gear, because a swarm of slick-headed field larks have been having an awful time reworking the holes that the quail have abandoned.

Faulting the miraculous scheme is foolish, but it is a mystery why the Designer of Everything didn't do something to keep deer hunters from tearing off into the face of snowstorms to chouse animals that can be choused just as well on clear days.

He must have figured that if beasts without reason had enough sense to lay up under a bush in stormy weather, then surely the beings that He made in his image would have the gumption to stay in their warm homes during bad spells. Keep in mind, however, that the first people were gardeners and not deer hunters.

A lot of the trouble has been brought about by the machine age. For over 50 years, man has been wearing himself out finding more means to move around, when he'd been better off finding more reason to stay home. In modern times every automobile manufacturer capable of putting a non-ticking clock on a dashboard has tried to make a unit that could wade swamps and run over the top of rock piles.

Messes like the one at this camp are their fault. Those cross-threading friends of the gasoline sellers have done more to cause folks to abandon their homes for the perils of the wilderness than all the guides in the Northwest. If those benefactors of the nation's junkyards had wanted to benefit mankind, they should have spent their efforts working on door latches that'd either stay open or shut, and left the mountain climbing and the deep sea driving to other parties. But it seems that the automobile makers won't be happy until they've created a car that'll climb Mt. Everest on a Sunday drive and during the weekdays make flat-footed surf riders worry about the 5 o'clock traffic jam. It's be a big help if they'd turn out one model that could roll by a gas station without stalling, but take my word, they sure haven't.

The weathermen claim that the storm will lift tomorrow. Once the thaw starts, the redcaps can resume shelling the hills and canyons. I feel sort of foolish for getting snowbound, but if I hadn't made this trip I never would have known why quail have topknots.